

# WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION

## MONTHLY REPORT TO THE BOARD

November 2000

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

#### *CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION*

##### **Yolanda Avenue Trichloroethylene Contamination, Santa Rosa**

[Staff contact: Susan Warner]

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is continuing to investigate the trichloroethene (TCE) contamination on Yolanda Avenue, Santa Rosa. TCE has been detected in domestic wells in the area at levels as high as 1080 parts per billion (ppb), and in groundwater at levels up to 1600 ppb. Cleanup and



[Yolanda Avenue (facing west), Santa Rosa]

Abatement Account funds were received last fiscal year to abate the contamination through connection of commercial and residential properties to city water and to conduct investigative work to identify a responsible party. Initial abatement activities occurred over the last several months. The property with a domestic well with 1080 ppb TCE has already been connected to city water, and the three neighboring homes on impacted wells will be connected to the City of Santa Rosa water supply by mid-December 2000. One industrial supply well remains to be connected. After connection to city

water, these wells will not be used for potable water purposes.

A soil gas survey was completed by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board in April 2000, which helped to define the contamination plume and provided supporting information to identify the site where the TCE discharge originated. The owners of the site have submitted a work plan for the investigation of the contamination, and staff is currently reviewing the work plan. In addition, a Cleanup and Abatement Order will be issued shortly to multiple responsible parties.

##### **Former Remco Hydraulics Facility, Willits**

[Staff contact: Luis Rivera]

On October 30, 2000, Regional Water Board staff attended a public hearing conducted by Judge Susan Illston regarding *People of the State of California, et al. v. Remco Hydraulics, Inc., et al.* This litigation lead to the establishment of the Willits Environmental Remediation Trust and a Consent Decree prescribing remediation activities for the site. The Regional Water Board is not a party to the Consent Decree, but staff is reviewing the proposed revisions to the Consent Decree, and will provide comments to the City of Willits on issues involving the Regional Water Board actions at the site. On November 17, 2000, Judge Illston will conduct another hearing on the proposed amendments to the Consent Decree in her courtroom in San Francisco. The Court will likely issue its ruling some time after the November 17, 2000, hearing.

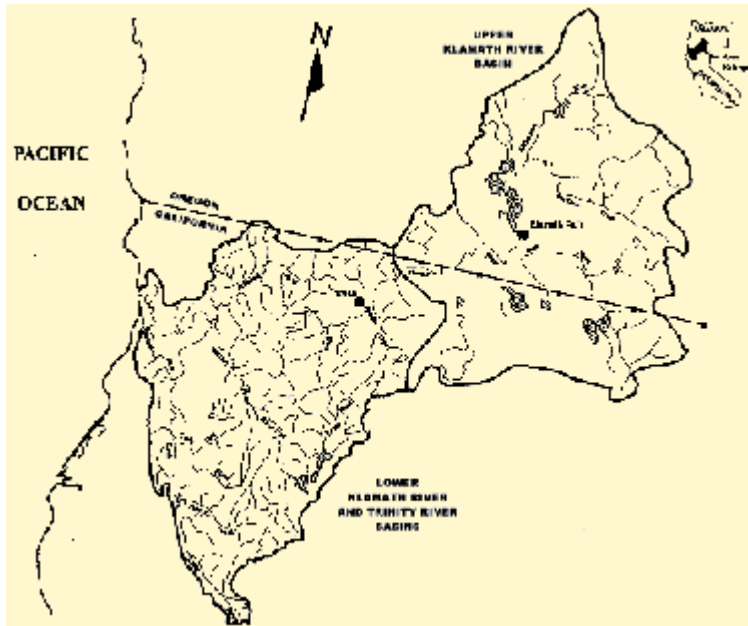
#### *WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION*

##### **Klamath River TMDL**

[Staff contact: Dave Evans]

In late September, Dave Evans, David Leland, and Tom Dunbar attended an initial meeting of SWRCB, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Regional Water Board staff to coordinate interstate efforts related to the FERC relicensing process for PacifiCorp facilities on the Klamath River, the 401

certification process for the relicensing, and the development of TMDLs for various portions of the Klamath watershed. This meeting was followed by a



(Upper and Lower Klamath River Basins)

meeting in Ashland, Oregon on October 19 organized by PacifiCorp as one of the early steps in the FERC relicensing process for its hydroelectric plants and related facilities on the Klamath River.

Representatives from federal and state agencies, tribes, local governments, and non-governmental organizations also attended. The meeting was an opportunity to hear and discuss the interests, objectives, and responsibilities of the various parties in the relicensing process. Staff expects to meet quarterly and have additional contacts as necessary.

## **WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION**

### **Watershed Assessment and the Gualala River**

[Staff contact: Robert Klamt]

The North Coast Watershed Assessment Program is new to our agency this fiscal year, and is a multi-agency program led by Resources Agency. Robert Klamt presented an overview of the Regional Water Board Program to the Gualala River Watershed Council on September 19, 2000, and solicited their involvement. Cathy Bleier represented the Resources Agency.

The Gualala River is the first of the series of North Coast streams/rivers for the North Coast Watershed Assessment program. The program's success is dependent upon gathering existing data from landowners and agencies, and new information

through accessing various properties in the watershed. The Council expressed interest in working with the agencies in this effort and had several good suggestions. Staff will have follow-up meetings to facilitate data gathering and collection and information feedback to the Council.

## **TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION**

### **Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO)**

[Staff contact: Frank Reichmuth]

On October 13, 2000, the CDF second review team chair recommended approval of three of the eight PALCO THPs in the Freshwater Creek watershed, without incorporating recommendations made by Regional Board staff pertaining to low impact silvicultural methods and water monitoring to verify compliance with Basin Plan water quality objectives.

On October 18, 2000, staff non-concurred with CDF's proposed action. On November 1, 2000, we met with representatives of CDF and PALCO to attempt to negotiate a resolution to this matter. PALCO rejected all of the Regional Board staff's recommendations. CDF is currently reviewing the issues prior to proceeding with the plan approval process.

In an unrelated matter, several activities have occurred under the adjudicative notice for the February hearing regarding Pacific Lumber Company's timber harvesting activities in several watersheds. Twelve participants submitted requests by the due date of October 25, 2000, requesting designation as a "party" for purposes of presenting evidence and cross-examining witnesses. The list of these parties, as well as additional information on the Regional Water Board proceedings, is available on our web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/palco.html>

## ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS

In August, the Board considered Acme Auto Wrecker's request to forgive the remaining \$20,000 due for the ACL Complaint 97-33 issued in 1997, and consider a supplemental environmental project. The Regional Water Board took no action on Acme's request, and the remaining \$20,000 was due on September 15, 2000. Acme submitted a partial payment of \$5,000 on September 11, and submitted the remaining \$15,000 on October 24, 2000.

\* \* \*

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board received a \$25,000 payment last month from Kernit and Susan Rankin, owners of Seven Arches Vineyards in Cloverdale. The payment resulted from an Executive Officer issued ACLC in September for failure to submit timely and adequate technical reports concerning critical erosion control work necessary to protect Steelhead trout streams. Soil erosion from their property resulted in excess silt flowing downstream into domestic water supplies and trout habitats in two tributaries of the Russian River.

The original penalty of \$50,000 was reduced to \$25,000 because the Rankins complied with the Regional Board directives to submit an adequate erosion control plan by September 22 and implemented the plan by October 15.

## CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS

Two Cleanup and Abatement Orders were issued over the last 30 days. One of these is discussed below. The other Cleanup and Abatement Order was issued to Humboldt County Civic Center, Fifth and J Streets in Eureka, with respect to required cleanup activities and monitoring at the subject site.

## CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTION 13267 LETTER ORDERS

During the month of October, there were five 13267 letter Orders issued by the Executive Director.

As a follow-up to last month's report regarding the contaminated drinking wells at College Avenue and Clover Drive, a 13267 letter was issued for the Sonoma

French Dry Cleaners at 946 West College Avenue in Santa Rosa.

The staff is currently investigating groundwater contamination in this area. A number of drinking water wells are contaminated with a chemical named tetrachloroethene or PCE. PCE is a solvent generally associated with the dry cleaning industry. The Order requires that a work plan to investigate soil and groundwater contamination of PCE and related chemicals of concern. The investigation shall determine the source of PCE and chemicals of concern at the site and define the lateral and vertical extent of contamination. The work plan is due no later than November 30, 2000. Other 13267 letters were issued to 2160 Sutter Road, McKinleyville; Humboldt Waste Management Authority, Arcata; Mayacama Golf Club Project, Santa Rosa; and Honeydew-Briceland Road, Etnahurst.

## 401 CERTIFICATIONS

There were thirteen 401 certifications issued and two denied without prejudice during the month of October. One of the 401 certifications is for the Department of Transportation and Public Works, Guerneville Road Bridge Seismic Retrofit in Sonoma County. The Guerneville Road Bridge was constructed in 1957 and is not able to withstand a large earthquake. The project will strengthen the bridge.

Information regarding proposed certifications is available at our Internet web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/notice404.html>

## SPIILLS, COMPLAINTS AND INSPECTIONS

Since April 2000, staff has been working with property owners on Blue Slide Creek to have them cleanup and abate a spill of diesel fuel from above ground tanks. The spill leached into groundwater and discharged into Blue Slide Creek, a tributary to Mattole River. Some cleanup activities have occurred.

During a September 21, 2000, staff inspection, surface water samples were collected from three locations on Blue Slide Creek. Total petroleum hydrocarbons as diesel (TPHd), although weathered, was detected at 9,900 ug/l (ppb) at the primary point of site discharges and 85 ppb approximately 150 downstream from the source and forty feet downstream from the lowest containment boom. The results of these samples reveal ongoing discharges in violation of the Regional Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) and are

impacting the beneficial uses of waters of the state. Pursuant to Section 13267, the responsible parties are required to submit a work plan that describes an effective plan to achieve immediate cessation of the discharges to Blue Slide Creek no later than October 20, 2000.

Additional actions will be required at this site to define the extent of contamination and cleanup/abate the contaminant discharges adversely impacting and threatening to impact site groundwater and surface waters. In order to establish the required tasks and ensure timely investigation and cleanup, a site specific Cleanup and Abatement Order was issued on October 25, 2000. The next monthly monitoring and progress report for this site is due by December 15, 2000.

\* \* \*

There was one reported sewage spill during the month of October. On October 29, 2000, there was an estimated 70 gallons of wastewater discharged to a storm drain from a City of Santa Rosa main line on West College Avenue. City crews recovered the 70 gallons. The cause of the blockage was noted as grease and no formal action is anticipated.

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Watershed staff participated in the following outreach activities:

The Gualala River Watershed Council's technical advisory meeting was held on September 6 in Healdsburg.

The Cumulative Watershed Effect Conference was held on September 7 and 8 in Sacramento.

There were discussions with Mendocino County regarding TMDL compliance held on September 14 in Ukiah.

In addition, the five Counties' Roads and Water Quality Workshops were held on September 19 and 20 at Trinity Alps Resort.

On September 19, the South Fork Trinity Coordinated Resource Management Plan Group (CRMP) meeting was held in Weaverville.

## SPEECHES/PANELS

Holly Lundborg, Timber Harvest Division, spoke at the Sonoma State University Environmental Studies Forum on October 5 regarding RWQCB organization, staff's role in timber harvest review, and TMDL development and vineyards.

## PUBLIC FILE REVIEW

From October 1 through November 1, there was one written request for review of the Regional Water Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, there were a total of 28 people who came into the offices and requested file review.

## PROMOTIONS/STAFF HIRING

New hires, all in the Timber Harvest Division, for the month of October include: Joelle Geppert, a Water Resource Control Engineer; Thomas Williams, an Associate Engineering Geologist; Will Arcand and Angela Wilson, both Engineering Geologists.